CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
13 April 2021
Regular Monthly Meeting

Present:	Nancy Bacci, Staff Liaison, Deputy Director Health & Human Services
	Bonnie Denis, Chair
	Colin Killick, Commissioner
	Lian Guertin, Commissioner
	Katie Milton, Commissioner

Absent:	Brian Postlewaite, Secretary, Director of Engineering
Guests:	Lucica Hiller, Stormwater Program Manager, IAM Engineering Div.
	Jesse Moos, Acting ADA Coordinator, IAM Engineering Division
	Bryant Gaspard, Program Specialist, OSPCD Housing Division
	Holly Simione
	Ken Joyce
	Alan Bingham

Note: Due to COVID-19 Shutdown, all attendees were remote via Zoom Meeting.

General Business

- Meeting commenced on 13 April.
- Meeting minutes for January, February and March reviewed.
    - VOTE: Colin motioned, Bonnie seconded, to approve minutes. Passed unanimously.
- Jesse Moos introduced himself as the acting ADA Coordinator, primary goal is to receive and facilitate ADA complaints. Conversation about ADA complaints discussed in new business, below.

Guest Presentation

- Bryant Gerard discussed the Fair Housing FY20 Report (https://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/fair-housing-commission-annual-report-fy20.pdf)
- Fair Housing Commission has a diverse membership, which required an ordinance amendment by the City Council.
- Most people with complaints do not formally lodge their complaints.
- Complaints are categorized; discrimination is a factor.
- "Testers" have tried to rent apartments with Section 8 vouchers. The results can be found in the report.
- They are looking for new developers to provide more accessible units.
- Commission questions:
    - Colin: If a renter needs a ramp, who pays? The renter, not the landlord.
- Guest comments:
    - Holly Simione: Is there some way that a prospective renter would not be required to disclose that they have a Section 8 voucher?
    - Ken Joyce: There are HUD funds available to modify homes for accessibility (e.g. walk-in showers, chair lifts, etc.)

- Lucica Hiller, requesting a letter of support for a grant to improve the public of the upcoming Highland Avenue reconstruction project.
- Commission comments:
    - Can the City commit to replacing existing trees to ensure complete wheelchair accessibility?
- VOTE: Bonnie motioned, Colin seconded, to send a letter of support. Passed unanimously.

- Draft letter presented to support the removal of brick sidewalks on Central St as part of the Spring Hill Sewer Separation Project. The letter may be useful during potential hearing with Historic Preservation Commission.
- Discussion: smooth concrete sidewalks are preferred over brick.
- VOTE: Bonnie motioned, Colin seconded, to send letter of support. Passed unanimously.
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- Holly Simione introduced herself, and noted the following:
    - Accessibility at construction sites should be improved,
    - Healthcare equality is lacking,
    - Wheelchair widths have changed.

Chair's Report
- Bonnie presented at the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets (SASS) Summit.
- SASS submitted formal recommendations to the Mayor and City Council:
    - http://tinyurl.com/SASSdeclaration
- Bonnie attended the Licensing Commission (LC) regarding the Posto HP space violation. The LC agreed with the SCPD concerns, and was sympathetic. The LC will continue to review and enforce if the violation persists.

Director's Report
- Temporary ramp variance for outdoor seating complete.
- Celeste restaurant variance for second floor seating submitted.
- Colin's renomination to the Commission was sent to the Mayor's office.

Old Business
- None.

New Business
- Bonnie: shared SASS document for review and feedback from the Commission.
- ADA Complaint Discussion:
    - Bonnie: what can be done about the many ADA complaints, especially with outdoor dining; Bonnie & Jesse to arrange a meeting to review these issues.

- Holly Simione: what is the internal tool for receiving ADA complaints? Can 311 have a category for ADA complaints?

Motion to Adjourn Meeting; approved unanimously.